

Message Text

SECRET

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5353

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 CAIRO 8676

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, EG
SUBJECT: MILITARY SUPPLY

REF: (A) STATE 111882, (B) STATE 111881

SUMMARY: INFORMED SADAT AND FAHMY (WHO WAS PRESENT)
OF FIVE NON-LETHAL MILITARY ITEMS WHICH PRESIDENT
CARTER HAS IN MIND PURPOSING FOR SALE TO EGYPT AND
THAT I WAS AUTHORIZED EXPLORE WITHOUT COMMITMENT
POSSIBLE GOE INTEREST IN PURCHASING EQUIPMENT IN
FIVE ADDITIONAL AREAS WHERE THERE HAVE BEEN PAST
EXPRESSIONS OF SUCH INTEREST. STRESSED NEED TO
AVOID PREMATURE PUBLICITY. WHILE THERE COULD BE
CONGRESSIONAL PROBLEMS, PRESIDENT CARTER PREPARED
TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PROCEED WITH SALE.
AFRICA LIST PRESENTED BY FAHMY STILL BEING
REVIEWED WITH VIEW TO DETERMINING IF THERE MIGHT
BE SOME NON-LETHAL ITEMS WHICH WOULD BE OF INTEREST
TO GOE. CONFIRMED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WILL
CONTINUE TO SUPPORT REQUESTS TO CONGRESS FOR
CURRENT HIGH LEVEL OF US ECONOMIC AID AS PRESIDENT
SADAT HAD REQUESTED. SADAT EXPRESSED APPRECIATION
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FOR ECONOMIC AID LEVELS AND PURPOSED ARMS PACKAGE.
HE WOULD NOT PRESS FOR F5E'S OR TOW MISSILES IF
THIS COMPLICATES OUR PROBLEM IN PURSUING ME PEACE
EFFORT. RE AFRICAN LIST, HE HOPED THAT AT LEAST
SOME HARDWARE COULD BE PROVIDED. HE AGAIN ALLUDED
TO SOVIET THREAT, USING ETHIOPIA AS SURROGATE, TO
SUDAN WHERE EGYPT MIGHT ON SOME OCCASION

HAVE TO FIGHT. GOE WILL CONTINUE TO ASSUME ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSIST ITS FRIENDS IN AFRICA AS IT HAS DONE IN ZAIRE. I TOLD HIM THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO OPERATE WITHIN CONTEXT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S NEW ARMS CONTROL POLICY BUT WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH HIM AGAIN ONCE REVIEW OF LIST IS COMPLETED. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING MY MEETING WITH SADAT YESTERDAY IN ALEXANDRIA, I TOLD HIM ABOUT THE FIVE NON-LETHAL MILITARY ITEMS THAT, AFTER CONSULTATIONS WITH CONGRESS, PRESIDENT CARTER HAS IN MIND PROPOSING FOR SALE TO EGYPT. I ALSO TOLD HIM THAT I WAS AUTHORIZED TO BEGIN EXPLORATORY TALKS ON POSSIBLE GOE INTEREST IN PURCHASING EQUIPMENT IN FIVE ADDITIONAL AREAS WHERE WE HAVE HAD PAST EXPRESSIONS OF EGYPTIAN INTEREST, ALTHOUGH IN THIS CASE IT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD THAT WE COULD NOT AT THIS TIME MAKE ANY FIRM COMMITMENT OF SALE. AS SOON AS I COULD REPORT TO WASHINGTON THAT I HAD BRIEFED HIM, CONGRESSIONAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE FIVE ITEMS PROPOSED FOR SALE WOULD BEGIN. IN ALL PROBABILITY THESE CONSULTATIONS WOULD NOT BE COMPLETED UNTIL SOME TIME IN JUNE. IN THE MEANTIME IT IS ESSENTIAL TO AVOID ANY PREMATURE PUBLICITY. WHILE PRESIDENT CARTER DOES NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE PROBLEM OF OBTAINING CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL, EVEN FOR A NON-LETHAL PACKAGE, HE WISHED TO ASSURE SADAT OF HIS DETERMINATION TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PROCEED WITH THE SALE. PRESIDENT CARTER IS ALSO SECRET

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COUNTING ON FAVORABLE IMPACT MADE BY SADAT'S RECENT VISIT TO THE US.

2. ON EGYPTIAN REQUEST FOR EQUIPMENT TO ESTABLISH AN EGYPTIAN MOBILE TASK FORCE TO COPE WITH EMERGENCY SITUATIONS IN AFRICA, I TOLD HIM THAT WE ARE STILL REVIEWING THE REQUEST. I HAD TO TELL HIM IN ALL CANDOR, HOWEVER, THAT A PROGRAM OF THE SIZE SUGGESTED BY FAHMY WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S ANNOUNCED POLICY OF HOLDING DOWN WORLD-WIDE TRANSFER OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS NOR WOULD IT BE CONSISTENT WITH OUR ARMS CONTROL OBJECTIVES IN ME AND ELSEWHERE. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE REVIEWING LIST TO SEE IF THERE MIGHT BE SOME NON-LETHAL ITEMS WE COULD SELL THAT WOULD BE OF GENERAL INTEREST TO EGYPT. I WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH HIM AGAIN ONCE OUR REVIEW IS COMPLETED.

3. I ALSO CONVEYED PRESIDENT CARTER'S RECONFIRMATION

OF HIS INTENTION TO STRENGTHEN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS
IN ALL FIELDS TO MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE. IN THIS
CONTEXT, PRESIDENT CARTER WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT
REQUESTS TO CONGRESS FOR CURRENT HIGH LEVEL OF US
ECONOMIC AID FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS, AS SADAT HAD
ASKED DURING HIS RECENT WASHINGTON VISIT. I POINTED
OUT THAT ANY MAJOR ARMS REQUEST COULD HURT IMPORTANT
BILATERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP THAT WE
HAVE DEVELOPED.

4. AFTER I HAD FINISHED, SADAT ASKED THAT I CONVEY
HIS "GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION" TO PRESIDENT CARTER
FOR HIS SUPPORT OF ECONOMIC AID LEVELS AND FOR THE
PROPOSED ARMS PACKAGE. WHILE THE PURPOSED PACKAGE
DID NOT CONTAIN EITHER F5E'S OR TOW MISSILES, HE
RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEM. HE WOULD NOT PRESS FOR THESE
WEAPONS SYSTEMS IF DOING SO IN ANY WAY

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COMPLICATES OUR ABILITY TO PRESS THE ME PEACE EFFORT.
THE PEACE EFFORT MUST COME FIRST. THE ITEMS ON THE
PURPOSED LIST ARE HELPFUL AND THE C-130'S IN
PARTICULAR WILL GIVE GOE GREATER MOBILITY. HE
UNDERSTOOD THE NEED TO AVOID ANY PREMATURE PUBLICTY
AND ALSO RECOGNIZED THAT THERE COULD BE A CONGRESSIONAL
PROBLEM. HE HOPED THAT ANY SUCH PROBLEM COULD BE
RESOLVED. ON THE SECOND LIST OF ITEMS (REF B),
HE CLAIMED TO UNDERSTAND THAT THERE WAS NO COMMITMENT
AND SUGGESTED I DISCUSS THEM WITH GENERAL GAMASY.
(I WILL DO SO.)

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

5. SADAT SEEMED SURPRISED AT THE MAGNITUDE OF THE "AFRICA CORPS" LIST GIVEN US BY FAHMY. FAHMY, WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT, EXPLAINED THAT THE LIST HAD BEEN DRAWN UP BY GAMASY. WHILE SADAT UNDERSTOOD THAT THE EGYPTIAN LIST COULD NOT BE MET IN ITS ENTIRETY, HE MADE A PLEA THAT WE TRY TO PROVIDE SOMETHING BESIDES NON-LETHAL ITEMS FOR POSSIBLE USE IN AFRICA. SADAT RECALLED HE HAD EXPLAINED IN WASHINGTON GOE REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL ARMS FOR AFRICA TO MEET SOVIET INSTIGATED THREATS. HIS THEORY HAD PROVED CORRECT. THE MENGISTU TRIP TO MOSCOW AGAIN SHOWED THE SOVIET HAND IN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTS. QADHAFI, ACCORDING TO SADAT, HAS AGREED TO PAY FOR THE SOVIET ARMS WHICH WILL BE PROVIDED TO ETHIOPIA. THE NUMEIRI GOVERNMENT IN SUDAN IS ALERT TO A LIKELY THREAT THERE. ANYTHING THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR USE IN AFRICA WOULD BE APPRECIATED. HOWEVER, WHAT IS MOST NEEDED IN THE SUDAN AND ELSEWHERE IS "FIRE POWER." EGYPT, AS HE SAW IT, MAY HAVE TO FACE A VARIETY OF ATTACKS ON THE SUDAN FRONTIER, ABUTTING AS IT DOES ON EIGHT AFRICAN STATES. "WE ARE FIGHTING YOUR BATTLE," SADAT ASSERTED, "AND HAVE PROVED OURSELVES IN ZAIRE." KING HASSAN HAD ASKED
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LAST YEAR FOR ARMS AFTER THE LIBYAN/ALGERIAN-INSPIRED POLOSARIO ATTACK ON THE WESTERN SAHARA, SADAT HAD SENT TO MOROCCO SOME SOVIET MADE 100 MM ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS WITH RADAR. HE HAD ALSO ASSISTED MAURITANIA. BOUMEDIENNE HAD BEEN "FURIOUS" ON THAT OCCASION, BUT THIS HAD NOT DETERRED EGYPT FROM ASSUMING ITS RESPONSIBILITIES. IT REMAINS READY TO DO SO AND HE EARNESTLY HOPED THAT WE COULD PROVIDE AT LEAST SOME HARDWARE. FAHMY ADDED AND "NOT SIMPLY PISTOLS."

6. I SAID I WOULD OF COURSE REPORT HIS COMMENTS AND AGAIN RECALLED THAT OUR REVIEW OF THE LIST IS STILL UNDERWAY WITH A VIEW TO ASCERTAINING IF THERE MIGHT BE SOME NON-LETHAL ITEMS THAT COULD BE SOLD. ON HARDWARE, WE WOULD HAVE TO OPERATE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S NEW ARMS CONTROL POLICY. IN ANY CASE, I WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH HIM AGAIN WHEN A REPLY IS RECEIVED.
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